

SOME NOTES ON ETHICAL INTUITIONISM

by William H. Davis

Nonnaturalism in ethics has two major variants, the "rational insight" version and the "intuition" or "moral sense" version. These versions have in common the belief that we "just know" or "just see" basic moral facts. The rational insight version claims that we know moral facts immediately, intuitively, and in the same way that we supposedly know the basic laws of logic or in the same way that we achieve any fundamental intellectual insight. We just see some things to be true, both logically and morally. In addition, the rational insight version tends to claim that moral insight is not merely *like* insight into logical truths, but that it is actually a *species* of the same thing. In other words, moral insight is an insight of our rational nature.

The other version of nonnaturalism, the intuitionist theory, does not urge that the moral and the logical faculties have a common root, but does argue that the moral sense is an intuitive faculty for bringing us moral insight in the same way that the logical faculty is supposed to bring us insight into the laws of logic or the rules of inference. Actually, the classical expositions of nonnaturalism do not always clearly distinguish between these two versions, and, as Richard Brandt observes, "it is possible to combine the two answers in various ways."¹ Whether or to what extent the roots of our moral consciousness may be entangled in the roots of our reasoning nature is an interesting question, but it is not crucial to our purposes here.

In the notes which follow I would like to present some considerations in favor of the intuitionist position, both by answering certain criticisms and, in the latter part of the discussion, by adducing some positive suggestions. W. H. Hudson's book, *Ethical Intuitionism*,² will serve for the purpose of bringing to light some common objections to intuition as a way of knowing. His book is largely concerned with the rational insight version of nonnaturalism, but his objections to intuition as a way of knowing apply equally to both the rational insight and the moral sense positions.

To begin with, we may briefly indicate some of the standard arguments in favor of the moral sense theory:

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- (1) Feelings of obligation, guilt, and injustice are unique and cannot be reduced to feelings of fear or feelings of social pressure or of habit.
- (2) The language suggests the fact of a moral sensitivity in such phrases as "sense of guilt," "feeling of obligation," and, most importantly, in the word "conscience."
- (3) Nearly all men of all ages and cultures have been found to share the same basic moral code—a fact which is at the least compatible with the intuitionist hypothesis and at the most supportive of it.³
- (4) Any ethical theory, no matter how elegant, must in the end be tested against our feelings. We would never accept any ethical theory which was too far out of line with what we feel to be right and wrong, thus showing that feeling is the final arbiter of all our theories.
- (5) The fact that the moral sense can be sharpened and dulled makes intuitionism more plausible, both by increasing the analogy with our other senses and by explaining such differences of moral judgment as do exist.

Other and more subtle arguments in favor of this doctrine can no doubt be adduced. They may be found in the classic expositions of intuitionism.⁴

Let us first consider Professor Hudson's objections to intuition as a way of knowing. Hudson asks if it makes sense at all to speak of knowing something by intuition. Perhaps, he says, we can thus "feel sure" of something, but can we really know it? He says:

I am entitled to say 'I know X' if: (i) X is true. I cannot know that London is the capital of Scotland. (ii) I believe X. It does not make sense to say 'I know London is the capital of England but I do not believe it.' (iii) I have a satisfactory answer to the question, 'How do you know X?', giving me what Professor A. J. Ayer calls 'the right to be sure.' (P. 57)

Hudson believes that alleged intuitive knowledge does not meet these criteria for saying we know something.

Let us consider each of these points in turn. First, Hudson says, I am entitled to say "I know X" if X is true. This is a point we need not argue here at length, except to say that it seems to place impossible demands upon us. Strictly speaking, we know scarcely anything to be true beyond all conceivable doubts. If we take Hudson's criterion here very rigorously, and if we start down the road on which he is placing us, we will certainly end up in old-fashioned Humean skepticism. As the extensive literature on this topic shows, much depends on how we ordinarily use the word "know" and on what we wish or decide to mean by it in philosophical discourse. This is a subject that can be debated at length. But in any case, an intuitionist is entitled to say that if we are going to rule out intuitive knowledge on the ground that it is sometimes mistaken, we must also be prepared to rule out all other forms of knowledge, including deliverances of sense, on the same ground.

Hudson's second criterion for proper use of the word "know" is that I believe what I claim to know. This point seems trivial, if unexceptionable.

Hudson's third criterion is that "I have a satisfactory answer to the question, 'How do you know X?,' giving me what Professor A. J. Ayer calls 'the right to be sure.'"

This third criterion as suggested by Ayer is the important one, but it is subject to serious objections. Ayer believes we must be able to give good reasons or evidences for believing as we do. But philosophers differ notoriously over what they count as good reasons, and even over what they count as reasons. Actually, we are not in a position to give reasons for believing many fundamental things—or, rather, we are not in a position to give reasons which will convince everyone equally, especially philosophers of Mr. Ayer's persuasion. How do we know there is an outside world? How do we know there are other minds? How do we know that reason is reliable? How do we know the future will be like the past? And, finally, how do we know we ought not to torture babies? When philosophers attempt to find cogent reasons for accepting all these common-sense notions they are led into a jungle of gruesome complications. In reality our "reason" for accepting all these ideas may be only that they are irresistible and overwhelmingly natural. About such fundamental things, "nature overcomes all doubts," as Hume acutely observed. But, while Mr. Ayer would probably reject naturalness as a criterion for acceptance of first principles, we may seriously doubt that he could adduce reasons for our belief in basic propositions that would satisfy a Humean skeptic.

But Hudson's real point here is that whatever may be found to give us the "right" to believe things, at least we know that having a strong intuitive conviction of something does not give us the "right" to believe it. Why? Because having a strong intuitive conviction is nothing more than strongly believing something, or simply feeling sure of something. According to Hudson, we cannot let "feeling sure" of something count as good grounds for believing it. This would open the door to complete subjectivism and fanaticism.

But the fanatic does not necessarily have a strong *intuitive* conviction of what he believes. He may merely be employing what Peirce calls the method of tenacity. Or he may be clutching at a belief which promises to promote his interests. An intuitive conviction may be a very different thing from a strongly held belief. One could even have a strong intuition and refuse to believe it.

Further, an intuitive conviction could very well constitute good grounds for a strongly held belief. Consider a somewhat extreme case. Imagine a man who can "intuit" with marvelous accuracy the numbers to be thrown on a pair of dice. He "just sees" the number that is coming up next. Suppose he averages only one incorrect call out of a thousand. A man with such intuitions, and with such a record of successful calls, would have every right to count a strong intuition as a satisfactory ground for belief. Or if we want to say the ground

for belief is the record of successful calls and not the intuition *per se*, we would surely be entitled to transfer our confidence to the faculty which gave us our successful calls. With such a record of successful calls, each one preceded by a strong intuitive conviction, a normal man would surely begin to place high confidence in his intuitions.

Hudson further argues that we cannot claim to know the deliverance of an intuition because "intuition is indistinguishable in cases where it is ultimately shown to have been mistaken from those in which it is not" (p. 57). Again, this is no substantial objection. As an objection it applies to all other of our alleged ways of knowing. Illusions of sense or of reason *as we are under them* are also indistinguishable from accurate insights or sense experiences. Only when they are "ultimately shown to have been mistaken" do we reject them.

Hudson further objects that we do not in fact accept intuitive conviction as a proper answer to the question of how a man knows because, "if we did, we should persist in our claim to know by intuition, whatever contrary evidence came to light. But only mad men do that" (p. 58). But there is no difficulty in supposing a man to have a strong intuition which turns out to have been illusory. The man merely admits he was under a false sense of conviction. Precisely the same applies to illusions of sense. A man may see something, may say he knows he sees it, and later discover that he was not seeing what he thought he saw at all. One writer gives an apt comparison: "We do not conclude that memory is an infallible faculty [simply] because it is bad English to say we remembered something which did not happen."⁵ Likewise we need not regard intuitive knowledge as infallible merely because of the difficulty of saying we intuited something that was not so. "It seems only reasonable to regard intuition as a developing capacity and therefore capable of error. . . ."⁶ If a man could call the throw of dice based upon an intuitive conviction, the fact of having one wrong call in a thousand would not destroy his confidence in the general trustworthiness of his intuitions.

More serious, however, is the objection that, unlike our example of a man calling the roll of dice where verification is easy, in ethics there would never be a way of determining whether our intuitions are "ultimately mistaken" or not. For this, some tests beyond the mere presence of the intuition would be needed. Let us consider in a little more detail the problem of testing.

Intuitionists often compare the moral sense with our other senses, such as that of sight. But Hudson argues that whereas with sight there are agreed tests for deciding whether a man's vision is defective, there are no such agreed tests for moral blindness. Hudson thinks that the intuitionist, when he says a man is morally blind, is uttering nothing more than a "vacuous tautology," namely, that the man does not see because he does not see. Without agreed-upon tests, what more can he mean? "If Smith failed every test for defective eyesight known to specialists, yet still did not see the tree on the lawn, it would tell us nothing to say that he did not see it because his eyesight was defective" (p. 59).

But it might be *true*, even if it tells us “nothing.” That is, we may believe his eyesight is defective even if we do not know exactly *how* his sight is defective. Of course, it may also tell us that our tests for defective vision are themselves lacking.

Hudson is serious when he speaks of our agreed-upon tests for defective vision and the lack of such tests in the case of alleged moral vision. And of course the idea of tests and verification procedures is important in modern empirical philosophy, and probably accounts in a large measure for the demise of intuitionism. As Richard Brandt says, “The most vulnerable point of non-naturalist doctrine . . . is the epistemology, the theory of how we know or are justified in believing ethical statements.” This author further speaks of “the profusion of nonnaturalist difficulties on this score.”⁷

The whole area of verification and its relation to meaning and knowledge is a tangled and controversial field. So controversial and unsettled is it that intuitionists need not panic at the mention of the word “verification.” In the first place (to use Hudson’s example of vision), no one has ever verified that any person other than the subject actually sees anything at all, as contrasted with reacting to light waves in the way a highly complex robot might. In the second place, all of our tests for defective vision rely either upon agreement with a consensus or upon a cross-checking with our other senses (sometimes mediated by instruments). But the same sorts of tests are possible with ethical (and other sorts of) intuitions. An intuitionist need not hold that we know the good by intuition alone any more than a sighted man must rest all his confidence upon his vision. Our detection and classification of a “psychopath” involves his deviation from a broad consensus. More importantly, ethical intuitions can be cross-checked with our other faculties. They can be checked for consistency among themselves by examining them in the light of reason. They can be examined to see whether they could consistently be put into practice, which Kant suggests is the heart of the matter. They can be checked as to whether they are in accord with our sympathetic nature. And since most ethical insights can be subsumed under a very few heads, perhaps even under one head, new insights can be checked for whether or not they conveniently fit under previously established categories. And if those categories involve natural properties, as is the case with several ethical theories, an ethical intuition can be checked against a scientific determination of human nature. (As I shall explain below, the good need not be *defined* by the intuitive faculty; the faculty may only point toward it.) A. C. Ewing speaks of checking intuitions by comparison of one case with another, by comparing the present intuition with our relevant past experience, by noting what would be implied for conduct if the prescription of the intuition were made a general rule, by noting consequences of proposed policies, and by checking the present intuition for coherence with our other generally accepted ethical criteria. “We must not suppose that, because an intuition is not proved true by reasoning, there-

fore it cannot be supported by reasoning. The use of tests does not imply that the belief tested is to be based upon the tests alone, but the tests and the original intuition tested confirm each other."⁸ All of this would be comparable to cross-checking our vision with our sense of touch, or checking the consistency of our visual appearances.

The idea of cross-checking raises a very important and neglected point. In most discussions of intuitionism, both for and against, it is more or less assumed that the intuition, if it exists, is giving us our sole source of knowledge of the good (or the obligatory⁹). In Richard Brandt's book on ethics he discusses intuitionism under the heading of nonnaturalism. But it is misleading to imply that intuitionism must be a form of nonnaturalism. It is quite possible that the good is some natural property (such as that which meets human needs), *and*, at the same time, that we have an intuitive recognition of those acts and situations which are possessed of those natural properties. This is a most important distinction, and the failure to note it vitiates many critiques of intuitionism.

If we were to follow philosophers such as C. I. Lewis, Brand Blanshard, and Richard Taylor in holding (roughly) that the good is that which meets human needs,¹⁰ we would have a naturalistic system generally amenable to scientific investigation. Just as we can investigate what amoebae or rats need for the fulfillment of their physical and psychological natures, we are not completely in the dark as to the kinds of surroundings and the kinds of acts that are conducive to human fulfillment. To define the good in this way is not entirely implausible nor out of harmony with ordinary usage. But such a system of ethics by no means precludes the existence of an intuitive recognition of the kinds of deeds and situations which are good by that definition.

The sense of taste is a highly reliable (but not perfect) guide to the foods that are nutritious (apart from artificial flavoring, etc.).¹¹ And yet foods are not nutritious *because* they taste good, but rather because they meet the needs of the body, promoting its growth, health, and longevity. Nutrition is defined in this perfectly natural way. It is not defined by the sense of taste. But taste is an innate faculty pointing us in the direction of nutritious foods. Now in the same way that taste points us in the direction of nutritious foods, the moral sense may likewise be an innate faculty pointing us toward certain kinds of conduct, and these kinds of conduct may very well be subject to a description independent of the fact that they register in a peculiar manner upon our moral sensitivity.

Cross-checking implies that the moral sense can be checked against non-moral considerations for confirmatory or disconfirmatory indications. This would be a problem if we drew a sharp line between human faculties, or perhaps if we were deontologists or pure nonnaturalists in ethics. But if we believe that no sharp lines can necessarily be drawn between our different faculties, especially our psychological faculties, or if we believe that the moral

intuition is pointing us toward that which is reasonable, or life and species enhancing, or in accordance with our sympathetic nature, or fulfilling and satisfying to all elements of human nature, or in harmony with God's will, or in the interest of a viable society, or all of these, we are in a much better position to work out a satisfactory ethical theory. If our duty coincides with the many and varied elements of our nature, we are in a very fortunate position. If, on the other hand, duty can in no way be found to correspond to our nature (taken in the widest possible sense), then no cross-checking of the moral sense would be possible—duty might be inconsistent, harmful, capricious, or whatever. If the ethical intuition were found to cut against the grain of all other elements of our nature, we would be much in doubt about the existence or reliability of such an alleged intuition. And the critics have expressed doubts about intuitive ethical knowledge partly because some theorists have placed *all* the burden for our ethical knowledge on this faculty and have not permitted it to be checked or tested by any means. Considering the universality and similarity of the moral sense, one could perhaps even make a case for such an exclusive view of the moral intuition. But it is much easier to make a case for it if we can see our way clear to find checks for it in our other faculties, as I believe we can.

All of this means that though we may have a unique and imperative sense of duty, it need not be "categorical." In other words, duty (conscience, the moral sense) may imperatively say, "This is right," without necessarily saying, "You must do the right *only* because it is right." The moral sense gives to us a peculiar, unique tone of feeling, and one might argue that obedience to the moral sense gives us our only distinctively *moral* reason for doing right. But we might well know that something was good or bad apart from the moral sense if by chance we had discovered an adequate definition of the good. Apart from the moral sense, however, we could never experience the *feelings* of guilt, injustice, or obligation. Presumably, however, our definition should largely correspond to our moral feelings. If our definition involved human advantage, in some broad sense, our duty would not necessarily be found incompatible with that advantage. Our felt duty may very well be pointing the way to our enhanced welfare, however that word is understood. Duty could even be pointing us toward the maximum of pleasure; but if we are not hedonists, we may replace pleasure with whatever end we decide upon, whether satisfaction-fulfillment, love, obedience to God, self-actualization, the fulfillment of our rational nature, or whatever. The point is that an intuitionist urges that we do in fact have an imperative sense of duty, but he does not necessarily have to say that we must obey duty only for duty's sake. It is not completely clear, in fact, what meaning that latter phrase is supposed to have.

I suspect that some philosophers feel that the positing of a moral faculty is too *ad hoc* or perhaps even too occult for respectability. But an ethical intuition is not so implausible or extraordinary as it might seem. There is nothing

more mysterious in some situations giving rise in us to a sense of injustice than in photons giving rise in us to a sensation of light. Or rather, if you like, both of these things are highly and equally mysterious.

People used to speak of the "five senses," but we know that this is a great oversimplification. Actually, the body yields many different sorts of feelings to consciousness. Besides sight (light *and* color), sound, smell, tastes (four separate ones), temperature, pressure, and texture, there are many other distinctive sensory experiences, including pain, lust, hunger, fullness, aching, itching, suffocation, sleepiness, etc. Likewise for man's emotional and psychological nature: Man experiences many quite distinct kinds of psychological states, including happiness (several different kinds), sadness (several different kinds), foreboding, melancholy, fear, loneliness, curiosity, frustration, anger, compassion, esthetic rapture, etc. Philosophers tend to concentrate on man's cognitive and conative nature when discussing the psyche. But man's affective nature is of great importance. Man's feeling nature is highly complex and multifaceted. There is no logical or scientific necessity to deny that the senses of guilt, injustice, or obligation are feelings just as distinct as are those of suffocation or boredom. Most babies draw back from high places, and react with fear to loud noises; adults feel an innate attraction toward sweet foods and an innate repulsion toward extremely bitter or sour foods.¹² Animals are guided by a thousand innate attractions and repulsions, which serve various purposes in the life of the animal or of his species. Amidst this great welter of different kinds of feelings and different kinds of attractions and repulsions, there is no reason to be surprised if man has peculiarly ethical feelings.

I believe it would help the intuitionist's case if he would recognize that moral feelings are probably more comparable to certain emotions than they are to our senses. I mean by this that we do not *see* an injustice in the way that we see a lion. Our feeling of injustice is stimulated by inferred elements in situations, often by what we infer to be the intentions behind people's behavior. Similarly, we do not *see* the fearsomeness of a lion; whether or not we fear the lion depends upon inferred elements in the situation—e.g., whether we have reason to believe he is tame, toothless, full, decrepit, paralyzed, etc.

To say that moral feelings are more like emotions than like senses may seem to invite us down the road toward some variety of "emotivism" in ethics. But I do not mean to indicate sympathy with that doctrine. To speak merely of "pro" or "con" attitudes toward situations is to fail to note the unique tone of feeling involved in moral disapproval. Hunger and lust are two sorts of "pro" attitudes, but they are totally different in felt quality from each other and from other sorts of desires. Fear of high places, repugnance at food when full, annoyance at being waked up, are all "con" attitudes, but likewise each of these is distinct in its quality. The intuitionist holds that the repugnance we feel toward certain kinds of acts or intentions is also unique in quality, with

an innate base in human nature, and moreover with a certain direction or bias as to the kinds of things which stimulate it.

The most plausible attempted reductions of the moral faculty are to feelings of sympathy or of fear of punishment. Those who deny the uniqueness of the moral sense usually believe that it is nothing but a variation of the emotions of fear or of sympathy. But examples of wrongdoing could be adduced where no fear of punishment could be involved and where no sympathetic response to the sufferings of others is involved. (Consenting incest with one's daughter, for example.) But in any case, introspection reveals that obligation and guilt have a qualitatively different tone from any other experience.

You can shuffle "I want" and "I am forced" and "I shall be well advised" and "I dare not" as long as you please without getting out of them the slightest hint of "ought" and "ought not." And, once again, attempts to resolve the moral experience into something else always presuppose the very thing they are trying to explain—as when a famous psychoanalyst deduces it from prehistoric parricide. If the parricide produced a sense of guilt, that was because men felt that they ought not to have committed it: if they did not so feel, it could produce no sense of guilt.¹³

Could people be trained to have a kind of feeling, a tone of experience, for which they had no innate capacity? Could people be trained to feel *guilty* if there were no physiological basis for such a feeling? This seems highly doubtful. People have no innate capacity for feeling magnetic lines of force, and although people could be trained to avoid magnets, or what they believed to be magnets, they could never be trained to feel the force fields surrounding magnets. And if they could, that would only prove that people had an innate sensitivity of a unique kind which had hitherto remained unstimulated. Likewise, people could be taught to pursue food after a period of going without it, or they could be taught to avoid it after eating a certain amount, but they never could be taught actually to *feel* hunger or satiation if they had no natural physiological basis for such feelings. Similarly, the intuitionist doubts that people could be trained to *feel* guilty, though they could be trained to act *as if* they felt guilty. Of course people could be taught to *fear* committing acts against society. But could they be taught to feel *guilty* over doing so? A subtle question, no doubt; but in this matter the intuitionist has a respectably strong position, from which he is not likely to be dislodged by *a priori* arguments.

Finally, I might mention one little-remarked fact which is of some interest. If we are indeed possessed of a moral intuition, obedience to it would be in accord with our nature and hence itself satisfying and fulfilling. In that case, not only would the conscience be guiding us toward fulfilling and satisfying courses of action (reverting here again to Taylor and Blanshard), but also the very act of obedience would be satisfying. J. S. Mill speaks of virtue as being not only conducive to happiness, but also something we may come to love in

itself, so that virtuous action, in his view, not only would lead to happiness, but could be pleasant in itself. And even Kant thinks that obedience to conscience satisfies a highly peculiar, "self-wrought" motive, namely, respect for law. Certainly the conscience, if present, is as much a part of our nature as anything else, and, like other parts of our nature, will frustrate us if not met on appropriate terms, and will yield its own kind of satisfaction if so met. Virtue is thus its own reward, even if there were no others.

This is comparable to saying that not only is pleasant tasting food good for the body in general, but it is also good for the tongue and the stomach themselves.

In summary we have the following questions and problems:

- (1) Do we have a unique and irreducible moral sensitivity?
- (2) Are moral feelings universal? (See note 3.)
- (3) Could an intuition be a source of warranted belief, at least in principle?
- (4) Could an intuition be mistaken in principle?
- (5) Is intuition merely the same as a strong belief?
- (6) Could an ethical intuition be verified or cross-checked in a manner comparable to our other senses? Are there tests for moral blindness?
- (7) Is the good necessarily defined by the moral sensitivity, felt in an irreducible and unanalyzable manner, or rather could it merely be indicated by the sensitivity?
- (8) What is our ethical intuition telling us? Can we generalize from our experience to a few principles?

I have not here discussed the second and eighth points, but I include them by way of making a more complete list of the important questions on the issue of intuitionism.

Of all these points, the seventh one seems to me a crucial one. For if we relieve the moral intuition of the burden of having to carry our *whole* knowledge of the good, if we merely let it point to the good, we can then feel free to investigate the nature of that good, without prejudice to whether it must consist of natural or nonnatural properties or whether it can be reduced to one or a few general items, and if so which ones, and so forth. If we do not oblige ourselves to define the good by our intuition, we are then free to cross-check the intuition against whatever definition of the good we finally settle on. In short, intuitionism is compatible with a whole range of ethical theories, and is by no means a dead option for ethical theorists.

When we consider the severe difficulties philosophers face when they attempt to say what knowledge is in general and how we may achieve it, when we consider the problems faced by the philosophers of science and of mathematics, when we consider that even knowledge derived from "direct" sense experience is problematic in important respects, it is no wonder that the

doctrine of ethical intuitionism should strike many thinkers as many times more difficult to justify than ordinary scientific empiricism. In the face of this difficulty, why does anyone try to do it? Why should anyone undertake to support so difficult a proposition as that men may actually have real knowledge of values, and moreover that they have this knowledge by virtue of "just seeing" it? Truly it is easy to sympathize with those who deny an ethical intuition.

But in any ordinary use of the word, we simply *know* that wanton infliction of suffering is bad. We *know* we have moral obligations. If it turns out to be extremely difficult to justify this knowledge, it is yet more difficult to deny that we have it. Even if we justified our ethical knowledge to everyone's satisfaction, we would still have to justify the process we used in the justification of it. The skeptic has no end of questions, and it may be that *somewhere* down the line, no matter how far back we go, we shall finally reach a point where no further justification is possible and we shall have to say simply that we "just see" or "just feel" something to be so. Perhaps in the case of ethical knowledge, we are already at that irreducible end-point just as soon as we "see" our duty (or the obligatory or the good). C. S. Peirce had something like this in mind when he congratulated the medieval philosophers for having the good judgment not to question first principles.¹⁴

Well, the intuitionist may be mistaken; all present schools of ethical theory may be mistaken, but our powerful moral experience will never permit most thoughtful persons to lapse into mere skepticism. And if the arguments usually adduced in favor of ethical intuitionism are not such as to win everyone over, neither are the arguments for the validity of scientific induction. The intuitionist has done all that can reasonably be expected of him if he can show that ethical intuition is possible in principle and that a fair number of important considerations conspire to lend some plausibility to his view. To hope at this stage for much more, on a topic of such notorious difficulty, seems to me excessive; but likewise, to criticize the intuitionist for not having more than this is probably too severe.

NOTES

1. Richard B. Brandt, *Ethical Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 187.

2. London: Macmillan, 1967.

3. I have argued the case for this point extensively in an article "Cultural Relativity in Ethics," *Southern Humanities Review* 9, No. 1 (Winter, 1975): 51-62. Suffice it to say that a surprising number of ethical theorists as well as anthropologists admit the point, and for the purposes of our present discussion we observe that Professor Hudson himself agrees:

It must be admitted that, when these points are taken into account, there has been remarkable agreement in different ages and societies, at least concerning certain broad moral principles. . . . None the less, the intuitionists' basic empirical claim that there are certain duties, which the majority of men in all ages or cultures have recognized, is perhaps stronger than many critics have admitted. (P. 53)

4. See for example Richard Price's *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*; Francis Hutcheson's *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil*, and *Illustrations Upon the Moral Sense*; Joseph Butler's *Dissertation Upon the Nature of Virtue*, and Preface to *Fifteen Sermons*; Shaftesbury's *Enquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*; Samuel Clarke's *A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of Good, and Obligations of Natural Religion*, etc.

5. A. C. Ewing, *Ethics* (New York: The Free Press, 1953), p. 122.

6. Ibid.

7. Brandt, *Ethical Theory*, p. 190.

8. Ewing, *Ethics*, p. 117.

9. "... the non-naturalist is in a stronger position against his opponent if he makes his defense centre on the notion of an indefinable 'ought' than if he like Moore makes it centre on an indefinable 'good'." Ewing, *Ethics*, p. 93. Whichever ethical term we take as basic, if we succeed in defining it or in showing that it is the primitive ethical concept, we can then probably succeed in explaining all other ethical terms by means of that one. It is not our present purpose to attempt to specify the basic moral notion.

10. C. I. Lewis, *The Ground and Nature of the Right* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); Brand Blanshard, *Reason and Goodness* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1966); and Richard Taylor, *Good and Evil: A New Direction* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970).

11. "Because the function of taste is to keep an animal or man from eating poisonous and nonnutritive material and to steer him toward nutritive food, it is not surprising that it has a strong affective or emotional component." *Psychology Today: An Introduction* (Del Mar, California: CRM Books, 1970), p. 286. No author noted.

12. On babies' reactions to high places see *Psychology Today*, p. 204. On other reflexes and instincts see Isaac Asimov, *The Human Brain* (New York: New American Library, 1963), pp. 298-317. On the taste of poisonous plants see "Poisonous Plants," *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: William Benton, 1970), vol. 18, p. 104.

13. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1940), p. 9.

14. Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), vol. 5, paragraph 264.